



MEETING OF MAY 16, 2006

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5C

Application I.D.: 2006-0011

Application Type: Single-Family Design Review

Location: 2852 San Juan Blvd

Applicant/Owner: Akbar Shakernia

APN: 043-311-380

Zoning: R-1B – Single-Family Residential

General Plan Designation: RL – Low Density Residential

Environmental Determination: Categorically Exempt, Section 15301, Class 1(e)(2)(a& b)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant requests Single-Family Design Review approval to construct a 1,837 square foot addition to an existing 1,094 square foot single family residence, resulting in a total of 2,931 square feet that is below the zoning district permitted 3,500 square feet for this site.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission **approve** the Single-Family Design Review subject to the conditions of approval contained in the attached draft resolution¹.

ZONING/GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION

The existing single-family residence (and proposed addition thereon) is a permitted use in the designated R-1B, Single Family Residential zoning district, and is conforming to the General Plan designation RL, Low Density Residential.

PRIOR ACTIONS

The subject property was established as part of the Belmont Country Club Properties subdivision in 1926. The existing house was built in 1958. There have been no prior planning actions on this property.

¹ Please note: This recommendation is made in advance of public testimony or Commission discussion of the project. At the public hearing, these two factors, in conjunction with the staff analysis, will be considered by the Commission in rendering a decision on the project.

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500 FOOT RADIUS MAP

SITE CONDITIONS

The subject property is located in a neighborhood of one and two-story single-family homes with a mixture of stucco and wood exterior finishes. The subject property is developed with a single-story house with an attached two-car garage. The slope of the approximately 8,000 square foot lot is level at the area of the existing house and the proposed addition. A rearmost portion of the site has a steep upgrade, which results in an overall average lot slope of 22%.

The site includes mature lawn and a protected redwood (tree #2) in the front yard, another protected redwood (tree #1) in the City right-of-way, a non-protected Italian cypress (tree #4) in the left side yard and a liquidambar (tree #3) in the right side yard. Several redwood trees and one large live oak (tree #5) are situated on the adjacent property to the north.

Site improvements include concrete walkways, wooden fences, a large deck and spa in the rear yard, and a double-wide driveway with pavers. The sloped portion of the rear yard contains four pine trees and natural ground cover that will remain, and will not be affected by the proposed construction. More discussion follows in the Project Analysis section (see below) regarding tree protection measures during construction.

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Existing Dwelling Floor Area/Layout

The 1,094 square foot residence consists of a living/dining room, kitchen, two bedrooms, one bathroom, and a two-car garage with interior dimensions of 18' 6" x 19' 6".

Proposed Modifications – Lower Floor

The proposed 599 square foot addition and remodel to the existing 1,094 square foot ground floor consists of:

- Removal of all interior walls and the right exterior wall and remodel/expansion of ground floor space
- New entry foyer
- New living/great room
- New kitchen
- New dining room
- New laundry room and pantry
- Stairs to upper floor
- Removal of existing garage
- New two car garage with interior dimensions of 20' x 21' with additional space for furnace and hot water heater

Proposed Upper Floor

The proposed 1,238 square foot upper floor consists of:

- Three bedrooms
- Two bathrooms
- Hallway with storage closets
- Stairwell

Dwelling Floor Area Summary		
Square Footage		Existing Layout/Proposed Additions
Existing First Floor:	1,094 sq. ft.	<u>Existing First Floor:</u> Living/dining room, kitchen, two bedrooms, one bathroom, 2-car garage.
New First Floor Expansion:	599 sq. ft.	<u>Modified First Floor:</u> Entry foyer, living/ kitchen/dining great room, pantry, laundry room, wet bar, stairway to second floor, two-car 20'x21' garage.
New Second Floor:	1,238 sq. ft.	<u>Proposed Second Floor:</u> Three bedrooms, two bathrooms, hallway and storage closets, stairwell and open to below area.
Total	2,931 sq. ft.	

Exterior Materials/Colors

The proposed addition and remodeled existing house would have a stucco exterior finish with stucco stone façade accents in the front, rear and on the chimney and columns, and a composition shingle roof. The upper deck would have a wrought iron railing, and the front entrance would have stucco stone columns with wrought iron railings and gate elements. The front windows and arched attic vents would have wooden shutters. Other architectural design features include a wood front entrance door, wood garage doors, exterior lighting fixtures, and a side yard wooden gate.

The color palette consists of off-white exterior walls, stucco/stonework detailing, blue/gray trim and window/door treatments, and a slate blue composition shingle roof. The building colors and materials are illustrated on the attached sample sheet (See Attachment VI).

Landscaping and Groundwork

The subject property has a double wide driveway in the front center yard that would be replaced by a curved driveway set off to the left side of the yard. It is important to note that the driveway was redesigned following the City Arborist Report prepared on April 6, 2006 (Attachment V). The previous driveway design would have required a new curb cut and the removal of redwood

tree #1 that is located in the public right-of-way. The revised driveway placement keeps the existing curb cut and does not require the removal of that redwood tree.

The proposed landscape plan also maintains protected redwood tree #2 that is located in the front yard. The new lawn area would be situated at a protective distance from the trunk of the redwood tree with stepping stones, rather than utilization of a paved concrete path, and would provide pedestrian access to the right side yard. Non-protected trees #3 (liquidambar) and #4 (Italian cypress) would be removed for the proposed construction. Minor pruning would be required for a large coast live oak #5 that is situated on the adjacent property and overhangs the area of the proposed construction by approximately five feet. There are four redwood trees on the adjacent property that would not be negatively affected by the proposed construction (the redesigned driveway was moved further away and the trees are located at a significant distance on a downslope from the subject property that the roots would not be impacted). Staff has included the City Arborist recommendations for tree protection during construction in the Conditions of Approval.

The existing paved walkways, patios and decks would be removed. New paver walkways are proposed for the side yards; a new entrance patio, new right side yard patio and new wooden deck in the rear yard is also proposed. The overhanging upper floor creates a covered patio (outdoor room) with a gas fireplace and planters at the rear of the house. The existing planter bed retaining walls would be replaced with new rock walls approximately 2' to 3' high.

Although no mitigation trees are required, the proposed landscape plan includes 9 new 24" box trees (2 Japanese maple tree, 1 strawberry tree, 2 redbud trees, 2 olive trees, 1 white oak tree, and 1 redwood tree), 147 shrubs (1 and 5 gallon), and 20 flats of annuals. The plan has an emphasis of drought resistant and native species with some ornamental varieties for color and aesthetic design.

The proposed construction would occur on generally flat, already developed surface and would require minimal grading.

PROJECT DATA

Criteria	Existing	Proposed	Required or Max. Allowed
Lot Size	8,000 sq. ft.	No Change	No Change
Slope	22%	No Change	No Change
FAR	0.137	0.366	0.437 (3,500 sq. ft. max)
Square Footage	1,094 sq. ft.	2,931 sq. ft.	3,500 sq. ft.
Parking	Two-car garage (18'6" x 19'6") Two uncovered	Two-car garage (20' x 21') Two uncovered	Two-car garage (20' x 20') Two uncovered
Setbacks:			

Criteria	Existing	Proposed	Required or Max. Allowed
Front (south)	32'6"	25'	25' *
Right Side (east)	16'6"	6'	6'
Left Side (west)	14'6"	6'	6'
Rear (north)	69'	53'	15 ft.
Driveway length	32'6"	25'	18 ft.
Height	13'6"	27'4"	28 ft.

* Per the provisions of BZO Section 9.7.4(a), 7 houses were surveyed with setbacks ranging from 22' to 30' with an average of 25'. The project maintains a 25' front setback, meeting this requirement.

GENERAL PLAN CONFORMANCE

The remodeled single-family residence does not change the intended land use of the site. The residence is in conformance with the low-density residential general plan designation.

ZONING CONFORMANCE

The proposed additions and site improvements meet all setbacks, height, FAR, and permitted use regulations of the R-1B zoning district.

NEIGHBORHOOD OUTREACH

The applicant performed neighborhood outreach as detailed in the Neighborhood Outreach Strategy and letter attached to this report. The property owner reported sending a letter to 45 neighbors within 300 feet of their house on March 6, 2006 informing them of the project and inviting them to view plans at the site on March 14, 2006. The applicant reports that one neighbor showed up and no negative comments were received. Staff has not received any public comments regarding this project as of the writing of this report. The applicant appears to have achieved the outreach strategy tasks.

ENVIRONMENTAL CLEARANCE (CEQA)

The proposed addition to the single-family home is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act by provision of Section 15301, Class 1 (e) (2)(a & b):

"Additions to existing structures provided that the addition will not result in an increase of more than 10,000 square feet if:

- (A) The project is in an area where all public services and facilities are available to allow for maximum development permissible in the General Plan and*
- (B) The area in which the project is located is not environmentally sensitive*

The proposed residence meets the above requirements for CEQA exemption.

SINGLE FAMILY DESIGN REVIEW EVALUATION

The Belmont Zoning Ordinance establishes the following findings for the review of single-family residential projects (Section 13A.5(A-H)). Each finding is listed below with staff's analysis of whether this project meets each finding in the affirmative.

- A. *The buildings and structures shown on the site plan are located to be consistent with the character of existing development on the site and in the neighborhood, as defined; minimize disruptions of existing public views; protect the profile of prominent ridgelines.*

The proposed expansion would substantially alter the existing single story residence in size and appearance. The proposed two-story house would have a stucco exterior with stone and wood accents that would complement the natural character of the lot and would be consistent in style and size with the established residential character of the immediate neighborhood. The existing residence is situated on a non-ridge, partially level lot with a steep up sloping rear yard, and the proposed addition would not disrupt any public views as assessed from San Juan Boulevard or from the homes situated above the house at the rear. Staff believes this finding can be made in the affirmative.

- B. *The overall site and building plans achieve an acceptable balance among the following factors:*

- (1) *building bulk*
- (2) *grading, including*
 - (a) *disturbed surface area and*
 - (b) *total cubic yards, cut and fill*
- (3) *hardscape, and*
- (4) *tree removal*

Building bulk

The proposed remodel includes relocating the garage entrance to the side to give the front elevation an improved residential look with window, arched attic vent, and wooden shutter treatments. The expanded lower level remains single story at the front and increases to a second story at the rear of the house, providing articulated roof lines that step back and away from the front of the property. The overall massing is broken up with a stone façade texture on the exterior walls, window and door treatments, columns and wrought iron railings. The proposed landscape plan provides a variety and reasonable quantity of shrubs and trees that also serve as screening elements and add to the texture/color of the overall site/building appearance.

Grading/Hardscape

The proposed construction would occur on a flat developed portion of the site and would require minimal grading. Some existing hardscape (driveway, concrete walkways) would be removed and some new hardscape (relocated driveway, walkways, patios) would be added, resulting in an increase in total hardscape (including the expanded building footprint). The proposed expansion

includes a new second story, which is effective in conserving open area. The rearmost portion of the lot would remain in its natural state with the enhancement of new trees and shrubs.

Overall, the estimated site hardscape coverage would increase from approximately 35% to approximately 49%. Staff believes a reduction in the proposed hardscape could occur by replacing the concrete paver pathways in the side yards with stepping stones over pervious surfacing, reducing the size of the exterior concrete patios, and by realigning the new garage and driveway such that the garage would face the street which would require less driveway hardscape area. However, staff also notes that the proposed architectural design of the garage as proposed presents an attractive residential design that would change to a less attractive front elevation by realigning the floor layout. In this case, it may be more desirable to retain the garage design as proposed and reduce the overall hardscape by replacing the impervious surfaces created by the walkways and patios with pervious surfacing materials. Staff has identified these issues as a *“close call”* in the conclusion of this report.

Tree Removal

The site contains two non-protected trees (#3 and #4) that would be removed for the proposed construction. Two protected redwood trees #1 and #2 and trees on the adjacent lot would be protected during construction as specified in the City Arborist Report. Although no mitigation trees are required, the proposed landscape plan includes nine new 24” box trees, 147 shrubs (1 and 5 gallon), and 20 flats of annuals. The plan has an emphasis of drought resistant and native species to augment the proposed architectural design of the remodel/addition.

Three of the four required factors (building bulk, grading, and tree removal) have been appropriately balanced for the project. Although staff has concerns relating to the aggregate project hardscaping that would result for the site, staff believes these issues are not significant enough to warrant a continuation or denial of the project. With the additional condition of project approval requiring revision to type of surface material and size of the walkways and patios to reduce impervious surface areas, staff believes this finding can be made in the affirmative.

C. All accessways shown on the site plan and on the topographic map are arranged to provide safe vehicular and pedestrian access to all buildings and structures.

The driveway is of adequate width, length and slope to provide a safe backup space and to park two cars. The pedestrian walkways are level and sufficiently surfaced to provide safe access to the house. Staff believes this finding can be made in the affirmative.

D. All proposed grading and site preparation have been adequately reviewed to protect against site stability and ground movement hazards, erosion and flooding potential, and habitat and stream degradation.

The proposed construction would occur on a portion of the lot that is level and already developed, and only minimal grading would be required for the proposed construction. There are no known geological or flooding hazards in the immediate neighborhood of the subject property,

and there are no streams on or near the property. Staff believes this finding can be made in the affirmative.

E. All accessory and support features, including driveway and parking surfaces, underfloor areas, retaining walls, utility services and other accessory structures are integrated into the overall project design.

The relocated and curved driveway generally integrates well with the natural features of the site, and the placement of the covered patio beneath the upper level is also appropriately integrated into the overall site plan. Staff believes this finding can be made in the affirmative.

F. The landscape plan incorporates:

- (1) Native plants appropriate to the site's environmental setting and microclimate, and*
- (2) Appropriate landscape screening of accessory and support structures, and*
- (3) Replacement trees in sufficient quantity to comply with the standards of Section 25 (Trees) of the Belmont City Code*

The site contains two non-protected trees (#3 and #4) that would be removed for the proposed construction. Although no mitigation trees are required, the proposed landscape plan includes 9 new 24" box trees (2 Japanese maple trees, 1 strawberry tree, 2 redbud trees, 2 olive tree, 1 white oak tree, 1 redwood tree), shrubs (1 and 5 gallon), and annuals. The plan emphasizes drought resistant and native species. Staff has included all tree protection measures recommended in the City Arborist Report as conditions of project approval. Staff believes this finding can be made in the affirmative.

G. Adequate measures have been developed for construction-related impacts, such as haul routes, material storage, erosion control, tree protection, waste recycling and disposal, and other potential hazards.

Review of staging areas, recycling and disposal procedures and adequacy of erosion control measures would be reviewed by the Building Division as part of the structural plan check. All construction would be completed in compliance with the Uniform Building Code and NPDES standards as administered by the City of Belmont. Staff believes this finding can be made in the affirmative.

H. Structural encroachments into the public right-of-way associated with the project comply with the standards of Section 22, Article 1 (Encroachments) of the Belmont City Code.

A temporary encroachment permit as administered and reviewed by the Public Works Department will be required for work within the public right of way. The Public Works Department has not identified any issues with the proposed improvements within the right-of-way. Staff believes this finding can be made in the affirmative.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The proposal requires Single Family Design Review which staff believes warrants approval. However, in light of City Council's direction regarding "close call" considerations, staff believes the following factors make this request a "close call":

- The relocation and redesign of the garage requires excessive paved surface beyond the required 17' wide x 18' deep driveway apron that is prescribed by the BZO.
- The proposed hardscape could be modified by siting the garage closer to the street and by eliminating the need for a 90-degree turn in approach.
- The amount of concrete surface area could be reduced for the side yard walkways and patios by reduction in overall size and utilization of pervious surfacing materials.
- The proposed layout of the garage and driveway treatment is generally preferable from an architectural design viewpoint, and that a condition of approval for redesign of the walkways and patios would provide a sufficiently balanced ratio of hardscape to open yard area.

Overall, while staff has general concerns relating to the proposed aggregate hardscape for the site, these issues are not significant enough to continue or deny the project. Based on these considerations, staff recommends approval of the Single Family Design Review with the Conditions of Approval in Attachment III.

ACTION ALTERNATIVES

1. Continue the application for redesign.
2. Deny the Single Family Design Review. The Commission will identify specific facts to support a denial, and a resolution would be returned to the Commission for final action.

ATTACHMENTS

- I. 500 foot radius map of project site (incorporated as Page 2 of report)
- II. Resolution approving the Single Family Design Review
- III. Conditions of Approval
- IV. Neighborhood Outreach Materials
- V. Arborist Report dated April 8, 2006
- VI. Applicant's plans, materials board, and photos (Commission only)

Respectfully submitted,

Tricia Schimpp, Contract Planner

Carlos de Melo
Community Development Director

Cc: Applicant/Owners

PLEASE NOTE:

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Attachments IV, V and VI are not included as part of this document – please contact the Community Development Department at (650) 595-7417 for further information on these attachments.